MANITOBA INTERCULTURAL COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

MARCH 1985

The Standing Committee has met three times since the last Council meeting.

As reported to Council at the last meeting, the Standing Committee has supported research by Dr. Gary Granzberg on the Portrayal of Minorities in the 1983 Television Season. Dr. Granzberg's Report has been completed and was officially released at a news conference on March 13, 1985. A copy of Dr. Granzberg's Report is attached to this report.

Council was also informed at the November 24, 1984 meeting that the Standing Committee was preparing a response to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's Proposal for an Ethnic Broadcasting Policy. The Standing Committee has devoted a great deal of time to the preparation of a response to the CRTC's proposal. The final submission is attached. It is our hope that the CRTC will consider very seriously our comments.

In addition to the research by Dr. Gary Granzberg, the Standing Committee has developed a Media Monitoring Form to deal directly with the question of racial stereotyping. The forms are now ready and will be distributed to all ethnocultural organizations, to libraries, churches, schools, government offices and all other possible places. I would encourage all members to make this form known and to encourage its use.

The Standing Committee has completed its review of a Statement of Policy regarding the Portrayal of Minorities in Government Advertising and Communications and submitted its own statement to the Minister, Honourable Eugene Kostyra. A copy of that Statement is attached. The Standing Committee looks forward next to working on the guidelines which will follow from the policy statement.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

AIDAN J. O'BRIEN,
CHAIRPERSON.

APPENDIX B

THE PORTRAYAL OF VISIBLE MINORITIES IN TV PROGRAMMING ORIGINATING FROM MANITOBA, OTHER CANADIAN AND UNITED STATES SOURCES

by Gary Granzberg

Chairman

Media Monitoring Sub-Committee
Media & Communications Committee
Manitoba Intercultural Council

Research Director
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February 1985

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A study of the extent to which visible minorities are portrayed on TV with accuracy, fairness and balance (as opposed to being misrepresented, discriminated and stereotyped) reveals a pattern which finds Manitoba sources consistently ranking first, other Canadian sources ranking second and United States sources ranking third.

This finding is based upon analysis of 183 hours of TV programming video taped in Winnipeg in 1982 and 1983 which yielded information on 2200 characters distributed over 795 programs. There were 1380 Caucasian characters and 820 visible minority characters (103 Natives, 387 Blacks, and 330 Asians) in the sample.

In the tripartite division of the programming according to origins, there were 36 programs from Manitoba sources (42 Caucasian and 16 visible minorites), 112 programs from other Canadian sources (237 Caucasians and 105 visible minorities) and 165 programs from United States sources (449 Caucasians and 431 visible minorities). Another 482 programs (650 Caucasians and 268 visible minorites) could not be classified as to source (most of these were commercials).

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* Any statement of opinion is the responsibility of the author and not that of the Council.

I would like to thank the Manitoba Intercultural Council (especially Michael Goeres) and the Secretary of State Multiculturalism (especially Bill Balan and Frank Price) for their support of this study. I would also like to thank the University of Winnipeg (especially the Anthropology Department) for provision of space and other resources. In addition, I wish to thank Lynn Jacobson, Lee Goatcher and Pauline Andrusiak for their coding expertise. Also , I am indebted to Dean George Gerbner and Nancy Signorielli of the Annenberg School for their help and training. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the help of the CRTC (especially Mr. L. Christie and Mr. W.L. Mahoney) in placing the sources of origin of the programs in our sample.

Judges analyzed the nature of TV's portrayals by following a standardized coding system modified from the format developed at the Annenberg School of Communication, University of Pennsylvania.

ACCURACY - MISREPRESENTATION

Accuracy refers to the degree of positive relationship between features of the TV world and the real world. In assessing the accuracy of TV's visible minority world, eleven features were analyzed: population, sex-ratio, age groupings, marriage rates, employment rates, types of jobs, patterns of settlement, rates of victimization, frequency of heritage language usage, and frequency of ethnicity in clothing, gestures, hair style, arts and religion. In each of these areas, the percentage which represented the TV world was compared to the percentage which represented reality. The average distance from reality was then calculated as a measure of overall accuracy.

It was determined that all three sources misrepresented reality. Overall, the average error was 21%. In United States programming it was 27%, in other Canadian it was 24% and in Manitoba it was 12%. Table 1 summarizes the accuracy-misrepresentation findings.

FAIRNESS - DISCRIMINATION

Fairness refers to the degree of equal opportunity enjoyed by visible minorites in experiencing TV's "good life". Fairness was measured by comparing the percentage of visible minority characters vis-a-vis Caucasian characters who participated in twelve valued facets of TV life. These included population visibility, maleness, settled adult status, stable marriage, sexuality, offspring, employment, constructive work, good income, freedom from violence, major character status and hero status. The fairness-discrimination score is the amount by which the percentage of Caucasian participation exceeds the percentage of visible minority participation.

It was determined that there was discrimination in the programming which issued from other Canadian and United States sources, but that the programming from Manitoba sources, in overall average, did not discriminate against visible minorities. Over all sources, the average rate of discrimination was 3.7%. In United States sources the rate was 9.4% and in other Canadian sources the rate was 7.5%. In Manitoba sources, however, the rate was a negative 5%. This means that in Manitoba based programming visible minorities participated in TV's "good life" at a rate which was 5% greater than the Caucasian rate of participation. Table 2 summarizes the fairness-discrimination findings.

TABLE 1

TV's Misrepresentation of Visible Minority Life According to Program Origins

Aspect of Life	Manitoba Productions	Other Canadian Productions	United States Productions	All Productions Combined	Real Life
	N=16	N=105	N=431	N=820	
% Population which is visible minority	6 %	8%	13 %	8 %	3 % *
% Visible minority who are male	38 %	70 %	67 %	65 %	50 % *
% Visible minority between 0-34 yrs.	56 %	43 %	43 %	46 %	67 % *
% Natives (of all ages) employed part or full time	57 %	74 %	83 %	71 %	26 % **
% Natives working in primary industry	0 %	19 %	50 %	29 %	18 % **
% Natives living in urban areas	29 %	0 %	0 %	5 %	25 % **
% Visible minorities who are married	0 %	8 %	3 %	4 %	37 %
% Visible minorities who are victims of violence	0 %	7 %	16 %	12 %	1 % ***
% Asians speaking heritage language	60 %	14 %	28 %	32 %	57 % *
% Natives speaking heritage language	57 %	0 %	12 %	18 %	44 % *
% Visible minorites who display ethnic behaviour in clothing, hairstyle, gestures, language, arts and religion.	50 %	30 %	29 %	30 %	50 %+ * (based upon language statistics)
Overall level of misrepresentation	12 %	24 %	27 %	21 %	

* Statistics Canada 1971
** Indian Affairs Statistics 1980
*** Annenberg School of Communications Statistics

TABLE 2

TV's Discrimination of Visible Minorities According to Program Origins

Aspect of TV's "Good Life"	Manitoba Production		Other Canadian Production		United States Production		All TV Productions Combined	
	% VM *	% Cauc.*	% VM	% Cauc.	% VM	% Cauc.	% VM	% Caus
	N=16	N=42	N=105	N=237	N=431	N=449	N=820	N=1380
% of TV population relative to % of real life population	+ 4%	-4%	+5%	-5%	+10%	-10%	+8%	-8%
Maleness	38%	50%	70%	66%	67%	64%	65%	60%
Settled Adult Status	38%	50%	54%	66%	54%	64%	50%	61%
Married	0%	0%	8%	8%	3%	19%	4%	16%
Having Children	0%	2%	7%	8%	6%	17%	7%	13%
Participating in Sexual Behaviour	0%	2%	2%	13%	10%	34%	7%	18%
Full or Part Time Employment	69%	43%	53%	61%	62%	61%	58%	42%
Constructive Work	81%	60%	65%	76%	68%	73%	67%	60%
Upper-Middle Class or Higher Income	25%	25%	39%	59%	31%	59%	28%	50%
Major Character Status	44%	36%	19%	49%	18%	54%	19%	41%
Hero Status	25%	0%	6%	14%	11%	27%	10%	12%
Freedom from Violence	100%	100%	93%	96%	84%	75%	88%	90%
Overall Level of Discrimination	-5%		+7.5%		+9.4%		+3.7%	

* Percentage of characters who participate in TV's "Good Life"

BALANCE - STEREOTYPING

Balance in the portrayal of visible minorities consists of varied and textured portrayals which expose the wide range of behaviours that characterize visible minority life. Depictions which are largely based upon overgeneralized preconceptions of visible minority life reveal stereotyping. Balance was measured by counting the frequency of portrayals based upon overgeneralized preconceptions.

A portrayal was counted as an overgeneralized preconception if it matched any part of a list of stereotypes that had been compiled for each visible minority group. There was a list of 17 Native stereotypes, 12 Black stereotypes and 17 Asian stereotypes.

These lists were subdivided into general and specific stereotypes. There were seven general stereotypes consisting of portrayals of visible minorities as ignorant, lazy, tricky, having romantically ideal and uncomplicated lives, lacking a rational ethnic perspective, playing humiliating and/or demeaning roles, and having undifferentiated personalities. Among the more specific stereotypes were Native chiefs, medicine men, braves, maidens and scouts; Black preachers, servants, athletes and entertainers; and Asian martial arts experts, geishas, waiters, laundry workers and philosophers.

In the analysis of general stereotyping, a score of 3 was assigned to indicate extensive stereotyping, a score of 2 to indicate moderate stereotyping and a score of 1 to indicate the absence of stereotyping. In a total of 10,017 observations (from all sources) the average general stereotyping score was 1.75.

When broken down by source, the average score of USA sources was 1.77, for other Canadian sources it was 1.71 and for Manitoba sources it was 1.61.

With respect to specific stereotyping, there were 6368 observations made upon 820 visible minority characters. These observations yielded a total of 238 specific stereotypes. By this measure, the average specific stereotype level from all sources in the years 1982 and 1983 was 3.7%.

When broken down by source, the level of specific stereotyping in USA sources was 4%, in other Canadian sources it was 4% and in Manitoba sources it was 2%.

OVERALL SUMMARY

There is measurable misrepresentation, discrimination and stereotyping of visible minorities in programming issuing from the 1982 and 1983 TV seasons. The problem is greatest in USA sources, least in Manitoba sources and at mid-levels in other Canadian sources.

Having said this, it is essential to immediately note that these findings do not warrant the conclusion that programming from the province of Manitoba is more accurate, fairer and better balanced than programming from other provinces. What can be said (considering the localized nature of the programming from Manitoba) is that there is a good probability ($p < .05$) that the '82 and '83 Manitoba programming was more accurate, fairer and better balanced than the programming which came into the province from outside sources and which presumably, was meant for national consumption.

The data required for comparing Manitoba programming and equally localized programming from other provinces has yet to be collected.

With regard to the relative multicultural merits of Canadian vs United States originated programming, it can be stated that there is a good probability ($p < .001$) that, during '82 and '83, the programming received in Winnipeg which issued from Canadian sources was more accurate, fairer and better balanced than the programming received in Winnipeg which originated from United States sources (either broadcast by cable on the CBS network or purchased for broadcasting on Canadian networks).

RECOMMENDATIONS

This demonstration of the differing levels of multicultural sensitivity present in localized Manitoba programming and more national programming originating in other parts of Canada and in the United States underscores the wisdom of a broadcasting policy which is aimed at placing greater control and creative power in the hands of agencies within each province who are involved in locally made programming.

In conjunction with this, the greater sensitivity of Canadian originated programming over United States programming gives weight to efforts aimed at enhancing Canadian content on television.

Continued evidence of misrepresentation, discrimination and stereotyping in most facets of TV programming, however, emphasizes the need for continued efforts at improvement at all levels. There is need for greater cooperation between advertisers, programmers, technicians, actors and visible minority peoples. Positive steps are required in educating, training and hiring visible minorities for participation in media fields.

Continued monitoring on a year by year basis will determine if progress is being made and where it is most needed.

The CRTC should incorporate content standards relevant to multiculturalism in its licensing policies. It should require applicants to submit a program for monitoring its own content and, as well, it should keep its own records.

The CRTC should enforce minimum standards of fairness, accuracy and balance. The following is suggested:

"SUGGESTED CONTENT STANDARDS FOR LICENSING"

1. fairness standard - Media should promote the principle of equality of opportunity by demonstrating that all of its characters, regardless of ethno-cultural background, have the same opportunity to experience the "good life" (i.e. hero roles, major roles, settled adult status with stable family, good job and income, well rounded interests, freedom from violence). This is achieved when characters with ethno-cultural backgrounds other than French or English appear in "good life" roles at the same rate as characters with French or English ethno-cultural backgrounds.

2. accuracy standard - Media should promote the principle of accurate and undistorted representations of ethno-cultural life by providing ethnic portrayals which yield a demography of characteristics which is equivalent to that which is to be found in real life. This is achieved when such characteristics as population, sex gender,age, occupation, employment, marital status, victimization and heritage language usage are distributed among media characters in the same ratios as occur in real life.

3. balance standard - Media should promote the principle of balanced and unstereotyped portrayals. This can be achieved by portraying ethnic peoples as they exist in reality rather than as they exist in our imaginations. General stereotypes such as ignorance, laziness, undifferentiated personalities, trickery, romantically ideal and uncomplicated lives and specific stereotypes such as Indian Chiefs, Black servants and Asian karate experts should not appear in more than 30% of the cases -- the standard achieved by the CBC and CTV (Winnipeg outlet) in the '82 prime-time TV season.

APPENDIX A

SUBMISSION TO

CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION AND
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

RE: PUBLIC NOTICE 1984-237

BY:

MANITOBA INTERCULTURAL COUNCIL
500 - 283 Bannatyne Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 3B2

The Manitoba Intercultural Council was created by an Act of the Manitoba Legislature in 1983 (Chapter I-55 of the Continuing Consolidation of the Statutes of Manitoba). The Council is to provide information and advice and to make recommendations to the Government of Manitoba on all matters relating to ethnocultural developments in Manitoba.

Every ethnocultural community in Manitoba has the opportunity to be represented on the Council. Delegates of the various ethnocultural communities meet at a Biennial Ethnocultural Assembly to elect their representatives for two-year terms to the Council. At present thirty-seven ethnocultural communities are represented. As an elected community-based agency responsible to the ethnocultural communities of Manitoba, the Manitoba Intercultural Council very credibly represents the interests of those communities.

The essential premise of the Manitoba Intercultural Council is that cultural pluralism is a positive force in Manitoba society. The contribution by all ethnocultural groups to the cultural enrichment of our Province must be recognized, and should be preserved and enhanced for future generations. Because of the importance of this diversity, the development of cross-cultural understanding and mutual respect is essential. The Council, therefore, seeks to promote intercultural activities which will increase knowledge and understanding among ethnocultural groups. All citizens contribute to society and are entitled to share and participate equally in all aspects of society. The Council endeavors to foster opportunities for citizens to recognize and address the economic, social and political barriers to equal participation often faced by individual members of ethnocultural communities.

The objectives of the Manitoba Intercultural Council are:

a) To review policies and activities which have a bearing on the implementation of the Government of Manitoba's Multicultural Policy.

b) To do research and to develop and to propose policies and activities which have a bearing on multicultural developments in Manitoba.

c) To promote equal participation of all ethnocultural communities in Manitoba society.

d) To act as a channel for the expressed opinions, aspirations and needs of ethnocultural and other community organizations, groups and individuals on matters pertaining to the multicultural nature of Manitoba society.

e) To develop and promote an understanding of diverse ethnocultural backgrounds by the sharing of our multicultural heritage.

f) To work toward the elimination of prejudice and discrimination.

g) To give full recognition to the contribution by all ethnocultural groups to our cultural enrichment, and to preserve and enhance these contributions.

The Manitoba Intercultural Council approaches issues with the view that the concerns of one ethnocultural community are the concerns of all. We believe that only united action can satisfactorily address those concerns. It is also the view of the Manitoba Intercultural Council that ethnocultural communities and multicultural issues cannot be considered outside the context of Canadian society as a whole.

Canada is a multicultural society. Any policy regarding the ethnocultural communities of Canada must proceed from an initial recognition of that fact.

The Manitoba Intercultural Council commends the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission for recognizing the need for a broadcast policy regarding ethnocultural communities. It is not a criticism of the Commission to suggest that some such policy is overdue.

The Manitoba Intercultural Council is concerned, however, about the assumptions and implications of the policy proposed in CRTC - Public Notice 1984-237. In brief, the proposed policy lacks a multicultural framework, it presumes the ethnocultural communities to be segregated from the mainstream of society, and it perpetuates the lockout of ethnocultural interests from conventional media.

We disagree with the approach proposed in Public Notice 1984-237. In our view, the CRTC should first establish a Multicultural Broadcasting Policy, of which ethnic-specific broadcasting of the kind proposed in the Notice would be part. A Multicultural Broadcasting Policy would proceed from a recognition that multiculturalism is an integral part of Canadian society and must be integrated into conventional broadcasting. It would encourage cross-cultural communication as well as provide ethnic-specific communication. It would recognize that the program needs of ethnocultural communities are not completely met solely by language-based programming.

This multicultural dimension is missing from the policy proposed in Notice 1984-237. We strongly urge the CRTC to first establish a Multicultural Broadcasting Policy and then to consider an ethnic-specific policy within that framework.

We do agree that there is a need for a policy regarding broadcasting for specific ethnocultural communities. The four types of "ethnic programs" are reasonable but incomplete. We believe strongly that even in single language ethnic-specific broadcasting there should be a fifth "Type E" program which would be a program in English or French or any other language or any mix of those languages that is not directed specifically to any ethnic group, and which is devoted to multicultural matters.

A significant portion of the broadcasting of "ethnic" radio and television stations and of "conventional" radio and television stations should be devoted to this Type E program. This would ensure a diffusion of the awareness of multiculturalism among all communities. Opportunities to learn and to understand the issues and concerns of other ethnocultural communities is as important to each ethnocultural community as it is to the wider society. Multicultural issues, we must stress, are of concern to everyone.

We suggest that the Commission's definition of "ethnic" radio and television stations be amended to include Type E programs within the 80% level. We further suggest that part (b) of the respective definitions be deleted, except for a requirement that a minimum of 15% of the broadcast week be devoted to Type E programs. With that important exception, we believe it to be highly desirable that the stations themselves seek and establish in the market place their audience and programs. The restrictions proposed by the Commission would unduly hamper this process.

It follows from the above point that we disagree partially with the Commission's stated Licensing Approach. While there may be frequency spectrum scarcity in some specific markets, we understand that such is not the case across the country. Specifically, this is not the case in Manitoba. The Commission in licensing must recognize and consider the peculiarities of regional and local markets. It may be that Winnipeg would be able to support one or more multicultural broadcasting ventures. In our opinion, if there is a willingness and ability to test the market with such a venture, the opportunity should be given.

As stated before, it is our view that multiculturalism must be integrated into the mainstream. Experience has shown that conventional broadcasting has generally ignored such things. It is our view that multicultural themes will continue to be largely ignored by conventional radio and television stations under the Commission's proposed policy. We strongly recommend that every conventional broadcaster, whether or not there is an "ethnic" broadcaster in the area, be required to devote at least 15% of its broadcast week to multicultural programs of Type A, B, C, D, E or any combination thereof.

We agree with the Commission's comments on the importance of brokerage to multicultural broadcasting. We would encourage any initiatives in support of greater independent productions. In the current national atmosphere of restraint, it is reasonable to anticipate an increase in independent production. For this reason as well we would urge that broadcasters be required to devote at least 15% of the broadcast week to multicultural programs.

We agree with the Commission that community cable channels must provide access to all groups irrespective of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

We recommend as well that there be some minimal professional standards of broadcast quality, which standards should be part of the CRTC's licensing requirements for an applicant.

A working principle of the Manitoba Intercultural Council is that media images exert powerful influences upon opinions and attitudes. We believe that the CRTC should recognize that the reality regarding ethnocultural communities, as defined by media (most especially television), is a distortion of true reality and a hindrance to multicultural principles. This has been demonstrated by Dr. Gary Granzberg in his report "The Portrayals of Minorities by Canadian Television During the 1982 Prime Time Season". The Manitoba Intercultural Council is funding further research by Dr. Granzberg.

Our concern is that there be safeguards established to ensure that media images of ethnocultural people are fair, accurate and valid. The images, while revealing the reality and complexity of ethnocultural life, should permit an understanding that ethnocultural communities are a contributing and important part of Canadian society, that they should be accorded fair and equal treatment and that their traditions have substantial intrinsic value and wisdom.

We recommend that every licensee should submit a proposal whereby they demonstrate a plan for monitoring the content of their programming and for ensuring that high standards in accurate, fair and balanced portrayals of ethnocultural communities are achieved. The CRTC should also monitor the licensee's program content and set standards for fairness, accuracy and balance which should become a part of the procedure for granting licenses.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commisssion must not be content to administer licensing criteria which neglects content. A sole concern for linguistic, financial and time criteria is not enough. There must be safeguards established to prevent programming which, though often well intended, nonetheless produces distorted and restricting images which limit and denigrate the self images of ethnocultural communities and restrict their potential for growth and integration.

We thank the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission for this opportunity to comment on this important matter.

APPENDIX C

GOVERNMENT POLICY PERTAINING TO THE PROPER PORTRAYAL OF MINORITIES IN GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING & COMMUNICATIONS

STATEMENT

Government advertising and communications must reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of Manitoba. All residents of Manitoba must be depicted as Manitobans. Visible minorities must not be made invisible by their absence from the media. Black entertainer, Salome Bey has pointedly and correctly observed that "If we are not accurately seen in the mirror the media holds up to society, then, clearly, we are somehow not part of that society."

Government communication should transcend mere message giving. Governments can and should incorporate social goals such as multiculturalism into its advertising. In doing so, it can provide leadership to other advertisers. Government communication should, therefore, reflect the racial and ethnocultural diversity of Manitoba, and should, as a priority, attempt to redress the imbalance which presently exists in the portrayal of visible minorities.

Stereotyping must be scrupulously avoided. Minorities must be represented as they really are rather than as they live in the imagination of the majority community. They must be shown as real people living real lives in this Province. Nor should they be shown in isolation. Racially diverse people must be shown interacting with one another. This will further the desire of the Manitoba Government to promote the integration of Manitoba society and to reflect the reality that Manitoba is an ethnocultural collection of communities of people originating from many corners of the world.

January 24, 1985.